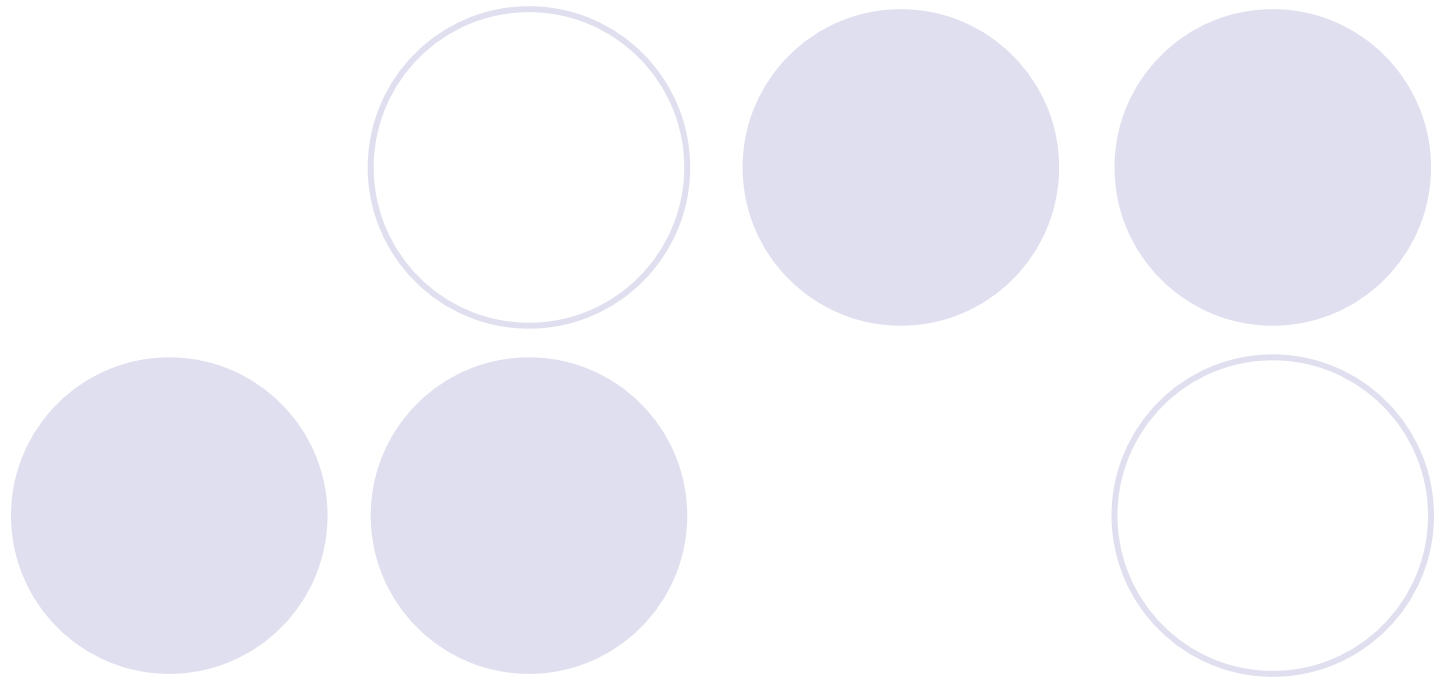


Acknowledging we are on colonized land



Migrant Health: Framing the Discourse on Health Care Access for the Uninsured and Undocumented within Social Justice and Human Rights

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Outline

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Introduction — *Looking into the darkness*¹...





Introduction – *Looking into the darkness¹...*

‘The public health field, although concerned primarily with addressing the health needs of migrant populations, cannot remain disengaged from the wider debates about migration. The health needs of migrants, although in themselves important, are merely symptoms of deeper structural process that are intrinsically linked to equity and human rights, and simply focusing on health issues will be insufficient to address these societal pathologies.’

-Dr. Clarence Tam

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

‘Health’, a paradigm shift...

- **World Health Organization²:**

»»»
*“**Health** is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”*

- **Peoples’ Health Movement³:**

*‘**Health** is a social, economic and political issue and above all a fundamental human right.
Inequality, poverty, exploitation, violence and injustice are at the root of ill-health and the deaths of poor and marginalized people.’*

»»»



‘Health’, a paradigm shift ...

- German physicist and Scientist Virchow:

‘Medicine is a social science and politics is nothing but medicine on a large scale.’

- Global Health Watch Report 2:

‘Since many of the causes of global public health problems arise from imbalances in power that permit exploitation and subjugation, our moral obligation to address the political determinants of health is inescapable.’



Health in a human rights framework

- **Human Rights:** Belonging to all persons equally because they are human beings. A higher order right MORALLY based and UNIVERSAL
- **The Human Right to Health:** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25)
“Everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of his family including food, clothing, housing and medical care.”



Health in a Human Rights Framework

- **How is a human rights approach useful?**
 - Provides the global standard for governments to adhere to and a standard to which persons can hold governments accountable

But why not *just* a human rights framework?

*“Human rights can and should be declared universal-
but the risk of having one’s rights violated is not universal.”*

- Paul Farmer⁶

○ 5 key limitations:

- **Historical context and political influences**- in the creation of international conventions, hierarchy of rights
- **Political limitations**– international conventions are non-binding
- **Ethical limitations**- does not address root issues of global and social injustice
- **Individualistic**-pertains primarily to individual rights
- **Normalizing**- Goals are focused more on attaining what others have, based on the status quo/accepted norms

Using a social justice framework

- **Defining Social justice** ...

- Defined and practised differently by individuals, communities, cultures and societies
- **Refers to the overall fairness of a society in its divisions and distributions of rewards and burdens**
- The application of principles of justice and equity to the **broadest** definition of society
- Includes respect for universal human and civil rights
- It is about relationships between people, and relationships between people and their environments



Using a social justice framework

● **Social Justice in practice** ...

- The responsibility of **everyone** to care for the dignity of the human person and the search for the common good
- Taking action to redress inequalities; the redistribution of wealth, power and status for the individual, community and societal good
- Addressing and correcting historical inequities insofar as they affect current injustices until the actual inequities no longer exist or have been perceptively “negated”
- Can be reinforced/resisted by structures that exist within society.



Migration- a social justice issue

- **War, Conflict and Displacement**
 - Occupation- for example, Afghanistan
- **Economic exploitation**
 - Globalized free market economy, structural adjustment programs
- **Environmental displacement**
 - For example, mining contamination in Paraguay, Mexico due to Barricks Gold projects
- **“Opportunity”**
 - No jobs



Migration – a social justice issue

- Since **social injustice** is often what leads people to migrate, **solutions** need to centre on a social justice, equity, and human rights framework.
- **All** migrants should be accorded clear rights and entitlements to health care.
- In this increasingly globalised world, there is a need to **rework the definition of citizenship** so that it includes a more robust set of social and health rights for all global citizens, irrespective of their nationality, country of residence or immigration status.

Migrant health advocacy

“There are none who are voiceless, just those who are the preferably unheard or the deliberately silenced.”

-Arundhati Roy 9

- Characteristics of health researchers and workers which position them to engage in advocacy:
 - extended altruism
 - honesty
 - training in ethics
 - a foundation in rational, scientific inquiry
 - a high status with politicians and the public
 - a direct view of the impact of social policy on health

Migrant health advocacy

- **So why are we not all advocates?**

- Vested northern interests in inequality (North/South disparities benefit the Global North)
- Lack of professional incentives or rewards under current system
- Social Justice is seen as threatening
 - Punishment for questioning the system
 - Self-censorship
- Acceptance of social justice discourse is lacking
 - Advocacy is understood as caring for an individual
 - Health is conceptualized in a narrow way including in education



Migrant health advocacy

- **A radical shift in advocacy?**
- A radical shift in how we see our roles as researchers and health workers is necessary to change what we do and how we are held accountable
- **Necessary components:**
 - Changes in health field education
 - Changes in discourse in the academy and in practice
 - Move to a broader view of health
 - Move to broader solutions
 - Changes in accountability: negligent for *not* addressing underlying issues
 - Regulatory bodies that exist to truly “protect the public” by rewarding professionals who address structural factors



Conclusion

- Global, grassroots movement leading a paradigm shift in 'health' discourse based on a social justice, equity, and human rights framework
- Migration is a **social justice** issue; solutions and advocacy regarding access to health care for all migrants needs to be fundamentally grounded in a social justice paradigm
- A Call to Action: advancing Health For All through Status For All

Recommendations:

‘For public health to be a successful endeavour, it too must be an idea that transcends borders, a global enterprise guided not by the interests of states and corporations, but by the needs of the most disenfranchised in society.’ –Dr. Clarence Tam¹

- We must begin to consider global migration and what drives it
 - Including acknowledging Canadian complicity in the generation of conditions that force migration
 - We should incorporate social justice analysis into research since a human rights approach alone is not enough to ultimately fully realize those human rights
 - Research can be used to galvanize political will necessary for achieving social justice



Thank You

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